

THE
CONVERSATION:
OR, THE
LADY'S *Tale.*
A NOVEL.

By JOHN MAXWELL,
Being Blind.

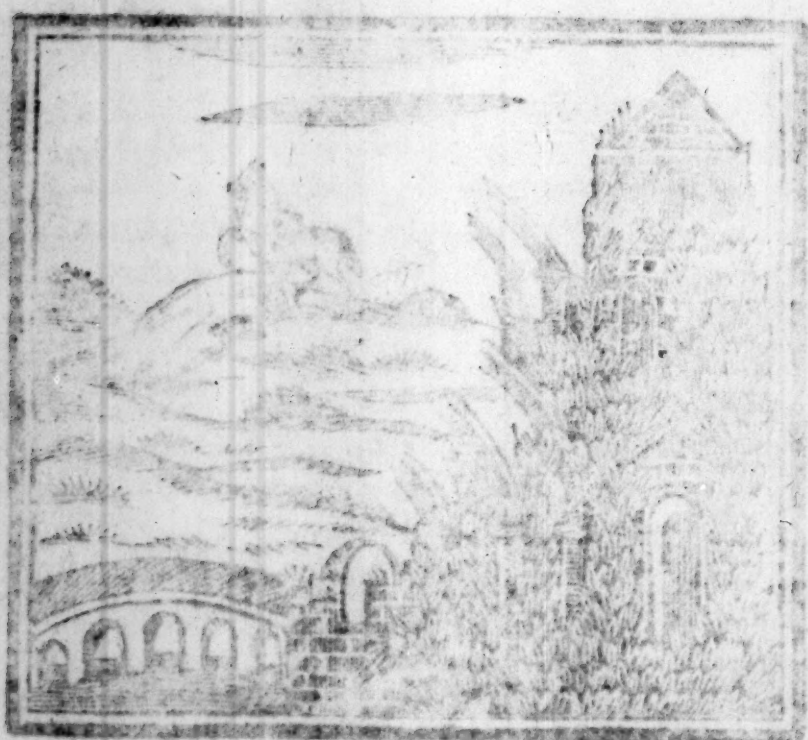


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The CONVERSATION, &c.



It was one of those lovely Mornings in the Summer, when the Length of the Days, and the Warmth of the Season, render the Nights so very delightful, like that Description in *Milton* ; where he so beautifully relates the Angels resting in Heaven. The Lark had just tuned her first Notes to Mattins, when Sulpitia and Rosalitta left their Bed, designing to enjoy those Pleasures peculiar to that early Time of the Day : Pleasures rarely pursued by Ladies, tho' they have in them Objects worthy the Notice and Admiration of Angels : They spent not much Time in dressing ; for they had no View of indulging the least Vanity that ariseth from being beheld by others, much less of attracting any Admirers ; the Brute Creation was to be the only Spectators of those Walks. Each having finished her private Devotion, they left their Chamber, descending by some Steps upon a noble Terrace in the Garden, where they waited to observe the first Approaches of the Sun ; all the while being delighted with those aromatick Breezes which are generally most pleasing during the Absence of the Winds, and their Ears charmed with Variety of Notes from the feathered Warblers, who had begun to chaunt Heaven's Praise ; and from the Brim of their Nests did as it were bid each other Welcome to the Enjoyments of a new Day.

Sulpitia and Rosalitta had now descended from the Terrace by some Steps of green Turf to the lower Part of the Garden, amidst a Multitude of Flowers, all richly fraught with Drops of balmy Dew to be exhaled by the Sun's

Beams, which had now begun to diffuse its Warmth around, and gilded all their Beauties. A thousand winged Insects danced in its Rays, and formed a Sort of Concert ; such as does not interrupt, but invite to Meditation. The Ladies now moved towards the Extent of these Walks, which was a Kind of Wilderness-Garden, full of Fruit Trees, whose loaded Branches hung with green and ripe Fruit, intermixed with many flow'ring Shrubs, and thick-grown Bushes, planted on purpose to invite the Birds to build there ; but into this they were to pass by a Bridge, which cross'd a little murmuring Rivulet, which run the Length of the Garden ; whole clear shallow Water shewed a beautiful Bottom, adorned with all Sorts of Pebbles ; and on whole Banks grew many Tufts of Rushes ; out of which they stood to observe several Sorts of Birds to arise, who lived about these Waters ; some having been just depositing their Eggs there, others leading a Brood of young Ones to bathe their beautiful Necks in its Stream. The Bridge was of Wood, which might be opened at Pleasure for the Convenience of a Boat, when they had a Mind to swell the Stream by a Contrivance in the Garden Wall ; and so watered all the Beds, which kept the Garden in a constant Freshness all the Summer. And now having enter'd the Wilderness, their Pleasure was still augmented by their Observation of the Parent Birds feeding their young Ones : Others, who were some Days older, were endeavouring to fly, and feed amongst the Trees ; in the Midst of which Trees was a close Walk, through which the Ladies were to pass, made on purpose to avoid the Noon-Day Sun : Having enter'd this Walk they had not gone many Paces, when from a Tuft of Trees, which grew not far off, they heard a most delightful Harmony ! It was a Voice full of Youth and Sweetness, accompanied with the soft Notes of the Violin ; the first Words were these, *O Lord, how manifold are thy Works ! in Wisdom hast Thou made them all.* This SULPITIA had given Orders for the Night before ; but had not acquainted ROSALITTA : And she, at the first Appearance, thought an Angel had descended to celebrate Heaven's Praise, and bless them with the Sounds ; but considering how improper

improper it was to make any Interruption by talking, during such Performance, governed her surprize, and stood like a Statue, you could scarce perceive her to breathe: The Musick concluded with these Words, *The Works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them who hath Pleasure therein.* This being ended, SULPITIA, smiling, said to ROSALITTA, I believe, my Dear, you are pleased with what I have done; but methinks I see a Mixture of Concern in your Eyes; you look like the Sun when it peeps from out a watery Cloud. O Madam, replied ROSALITTA with a Sigh, that Concern you speak of proceeds from a dear, sad Remembrance of some Persons, of whom I shall shortly have Occasion to speak: Persons, added she, that none but they which are possess'd of SULPITIA's Goodness and Understanding, are capable of imitating: And, to make you sensible how much I am pleased with this Morning's Entertainment, I do assure you, that not the grandest Assembly, of which I have had sometimes the Honour to be of the Number, could afford me half this Satisfaction: No, went she on, these Flowers, these Trees, these Birds, and all these other Beauties, with the Reflections consequent to such Contemplation, are in my Sentiments, far superior to the most glaring Shews, or brightest Stars that ever grac'd a Drawing Room; I am only afraid of being too fond of them, lest that should be a Means of cooling my Desires after the Fruition of better Things, of which I take these to be a Shadow. These Fears, replied SULPITIA, gravely, proceed from Weakness; whilst we can mortify every vicious Inclination; there are none perhaps, but what may have something, was it indulged, might be call'd their Darling Vice; but whilst that is denied, we may reasonably believe, we shall be assisted in ev'ry Virtue which Time and Opportunity shall present: And, as to the Pursuit of those Pleasures you speak of, provided they clash not with the Performance of other Duties, they are not only the most innocent, but laudable: Nay, to be insensible and totally neglect them wou'd be criminal; for that would be Ingratitude to the Divine Goodness; for sure it is a Happiness for Angels, who look into these and greater Things which are hid from us; and

so admiring the divine Wisdom, their Adoration is heighten'd, and their Love burns brighter ; and that Love, which flows from a Thirst after His divine Perfections, is better than that which springs from Affliction. There are many, as One has wisely observed, that can believe, and love ; but they are greater Minds that can believe, and consider too : But these are rare Capacities, and excellent Understandings ; so that Afflictions are profitable for the World, and what none, perhaps, but in some Measure stands in need of.

By this Time they had reached the Verge of these Gardens, which were encompass'd with an high Wall for Privacy, and the Convenience of Fruit Trees ; but Sulpitia had caused a pleasant Hill to be rais'd in a Corner of the Garden ; which Hill they ascend'd by many winding Steps ; and the Hill being cover'd with Trees render'd them invisible 'till they had reach'd the Top, which was inclos'd with a double Hedge of Quick-Wood for Ornament and Safety. On this they rested to view a pleasant Prospect. It was a rich Valley, which lay at such a proper Distance, that without the Help of Glasses they could easily distinguish every Flower. Many pleasant Hills were rang'd on each Side the Valley, enamell'd with Flowers, on whose Brows were feeding many Flocks o' Sheep. In the Midst of the Valley run a clear Water, where the Flocks came down to drink. So that it was a Scene not unlike the Description of *Arcadia*. But the Sun growing too hot, they enter'd into a close Arbour, which stood on the Top of this Hill, cover'd with Branches of Roses and Jessamine. Having seated themselves on a Bank of Camomile, Sulpitia press'd Rosalitta to give her that Relation she so often wish'd, and which her late Indisposition had so long depriv'd her of ; she, without tedious Ceremony, began as follows.

You will excuse me, Madam, if I be not particular concerning my Family, because I am sensible many Circumstances I have already occur'd, which must have given you to understand it was noble, as well as unfortunate. My Father was a younger Brother, and the Estate much impair'd by the Extravagance of some, and the Misfortune

of others ; so that his Fortune was but small. My Mother was born to a very plentiful one ; but by the Injustice of Guardians was reduced to the same Circumstance. I was their only Child ; but had the Misfortune to loose my Mother when I was very young. My Father doated on me, and spared for no Cost to give me a polite Education, which was a Means of rendering me more unhappy to be made acquainted with all the Gairies and Elegancies of Life, and nothing to support them. A Fault, which too many Parents are guilty of, who move in a much lower Sphere ; who lay out all their present Advantage in a Thirst after Grandeur ; which Grandeur perhaps a Fever is able to destroy. This is a forcing Children into Temptation, by setting them above a prudent Industry, when had they avoided these Delicacies they might have perform'd with Pleasure, excepting those of which I fear we have but few Instances, who make it a Virtue, by exercising a patient Resignation. But, alas ! how many is it to be feared have launched into the greatest Crimes to avoid the Inconvenience of such a Change. But I ask Pardon for this Digression, and will tell you, that in a few Years my Father's Fortune was all spent. This was a melancholly Reflection for one of my Age, who had just enter'd into the Pleasures of high Life ; but that Cloud was quickly dispersed by the Generosity of that Nobleman you have heard me speak of. The Duke had always a very great Value for my Father, and now insisted upon his living with him ; which my Father accepted of, and I was placed in the Midst of a World of Delight and Danger. Our Time pass'd in a Round of Pleasure ; during the Winter, we lived near the Court, where we enjoyed all the Variety and Extravagance of the Town ; and in the Summer, at a fine Country Seat of the Duke's. But, Oh ! how different to *Sulpitia's* Inducements was our residing there ! We had not the least Motive, such as Wisdom and Piety suggests ; but because it was the Fashion, and because Company is then so much dispers'd, alas ! all these Delights were quite dull and insipid to Persons of our Taste. We lodged indeed in the Country ; but all our Care was to render it the

Town in Miniature, as to Diversions. We were at the greatest Loss to spend *Sunday* agreeably, because Custom and the Laws was some Restraint. The Church we never saw; for what should we do there? We never thought of Heaven, nor desired any other than what we were already possessed of. This was a dangerous State; but now a sad Accident happen'd to interrupt our Happiness, and especially my Repose. My Father was brought home wounded, bleeding and dying. This was occasion'd by a Fall from his Horse: He had scarce Time to bid me Farewell. And now you may imagine, Madam, what I underwent by this Misfortune, which indeed was the greatest Sorrow I ever experienced, and which Heaven was pleas'd to make use of as a Means towards my Reformation, by kindling in my Breast some Sparks of Consideration. For tho' Heaven does not force us to be virtuous, yet no doubt it oft makes natural Causes instrumental in our Preservation. So indeed I found it. For my great Tenderness for my Father, which first Springs from a Passion in Nature, and that Tenderness being heighten'd by his Fondness and Endearments, made my Grief more quick and lively than perhaps wou'd have been found in another of a different Complexion and Circumstances; and the melancholly Reflection of my deplorable Condition, now being left an Orphan, without any Provision, except my Cloaths and Jewels, enhanced my Grief, and made all former Enjoyments distasteful, by setting them in a true Light, shewing how unsatisfactory and dangerous they are when pursued with too much Eagerness; I now began to reflect on the Sadness of my Father's sudden and untimely Death; and considering in how many Cases I was liable to the same Danger, made me afraid; and Fear, you will allow, while it sinks not into Weakness and Superstition, is an excellent Preservative against Vice: Experience shews it: And that wise Writer has told us so. The Duke and Dutchess treated me with much Kindness, and took a great deal of Pains to divert my Sorrow. The Duke made me large Professions, and told me, he would provide for me as his own; which wou'd have been indeed a very generous and chari-

table Action, had it not been sullied with what I did not in the least suspect. He begun to declare a Passion for me. This was a Temptation that carried in it great Danger ; for it concerned both my Interest and Pleasure. My Circumstances I have told you ; and the Duke was a very amiable Person, and young ; and when that happens to hit the Fancy, there in my Opinion lies the greatest Danger. And well it was for me this did not happen in my thoughtless Days of Gaiety ; but now, my Grief having had the Effect I spoke of, did as it were arm me against all his Attacks. He did not offer at the least present Gratification, but acted with great Caution and Subtlety ; slyly insinuating, that the Dutches, who was but an infirm Woman, was not likely to live long ; and then he shou'd think it his greatest Happiness to make me his Bride. All this I heard without the least Satisfaction ; nay, rather with Horror and Detestation : And tho' sometimes it wou'd crowd in, to entertain my FANCY in the Form he had dress'd it ; yet I presently discarded it, being persuaded such Thoughts are criminal. I took all the Care that was possible to avoid every Opportunity of his being alone with me, and begun to be in Love with Solitude. I spent many Hours in the Walks and Gardens, which were very fine ; and the Family believ'd it was all owing to my Grief for the Loss of my Father. But beside that, I had other Motives, which induced me to choose this Retirement. I did it in some measure to avoid that constant Hurry of Company, which daily fill'd the House, and which no religious Person can give up all their Time to, and be innocent : For, not to mention the many Vices we are liable to amidst that Variety, such as Detraction, the many Circumstances of Pride and Wantonness ; nay, Prophaneness often has its Share too ; besides all these, I say such Conversations seldom amount to more than Loss of Time, and does but unhallow the Day. It was in one of these pleasing Privacies, which we now enjoy, that I was set ruminating upon my unhappy Condition, when Heaven was pleased to afford me another Favour to strengthen those Resolutions I had begun in ac-

taining to Virtue And tho' in some Persons Cases of this Nature are more visible, and seem as it were special ; yet no doubt Heaven affords every one what is sufficient, if they will but accept it. My Maid came to bring me a Letter which she had just received for me. I knew the Hand as soon as I looked on it ; and, having given her some necessary Orders, which she went to execute, I opened it, and read these Words :

Dear ROSALITTA,

PErhaps, before this can reach your Hand, your fluttering, gay unhappy OSMINDA will have closed her last Scene of Pageantry amidst a Train of Mourners : I mean, they who shall assist at my melancholly Obsequies. Whether this will be so soon as my Fears suggest, I know not : But this I can assure you of, that shortly, very shortly, I must bid Adieu to all those empty Pleasures that have perhaps undone me. That this is more than probable, I have much Assurance ; first, my own Weakness, which is not to be rank'd amongst acute Pains ; so gives me Leisure for Reflection, which pains me more than Fevers, or the Stone. The Doctors all declare, they have no Hopes ; but what sits heaviest on me, is a Circumstance I am going to relate. You must know that in our Family, when a near Relation is to dye, there is always a supernatural Appearance. Nothing is seen ; but you hear as it were a Person, and that of no mean Size, walking near you. This my Woman has lately been Witness of ; which her Fears betray'd, that make me understand my Dissolution is near. O my Dear, cou'd you be sensible of half those anxious Thoughts which now invade me, you sure wou'd spare a Moment from your Pleasure to pity my Distress. O cou'd you view, and in the Light that I do, the Approach of Death. --- Death ! A Thing which most our Nature loaths, which the wise Author of it has implanted in us for a wise End, which even the Best are not exempted from ; what must the Guilty feel then by its Terrors ? They are Omissions which so perplex me : Because I think I am free from flagrant Crimes, which some are stain'd with, even from that common one, by which I fear such Multitudes are lost ; I mean Unchastity ; yet this Reflection gives me little Comfort, be-
cause

cause I am not conscious to myself of any more than Pride that has secured me. When I survey my Life, methinks I see it rise like a huge Blank, all empty, waste and void ; in which no virtuous Characters are writ to comfort and sustain my drooping Spirit by those sweet Whispers, Thou shalt shortly be in Company with Angels ! --- No, I am lost to that. I have consumed my Wealth in every Vanity, in much Excess of Dress and Equipage, in much Voluptuousness, and feeding Servants ; Luxury all, to feed my Pride. No Widows nor Orphans have I reliev'd ; nor ever chear'd the sad indigent Heart. No Prayers, no Vows, no Praises have been made, which wou'd as Jewels have adorn'd my Soul, that now appears most desolate and forlorn ; too like that foolish she, who was distress'd that left in Heaven no Curtain should be found to make Distinction between the Poor and Rich. O were it possible, what would I give to live my Days again, to have it in my Power to practice Virtue. Yet even in this, I am not certain I am not deceiv'd. But Heaven, that knows the Secrets of the Heart, knows if it is sincere what Proofs are left me. I have now performed much, I have wept, and all my Fortune I have given in Charity : Only this remains the greatest, and indeed the best of Charities, to warn my Dear to shun such dangerous Paths. O let me now prevail you'll be secure ; and it must needs redound to my Advantage. Farewell. I feel my Fit return, which makes me tremble so I cannot hold my Pen. You'll never see me more ; but when you come to Town, if you enquire for me, it must be amongst the Tombs. Once more, farewell ; and may we meet in Heaven. *

Amen, I said with very great Devotion, and let fall many Tears upon the Paper. Alas ! said I, if such Distress is seen in One ; now, when Religion sits so loose upon the Generality of the World, that many, some from Carelessness in not improving their Understandings but more from a Desire of purchasing Heaven at the easiest Rate, wou'd pronounce OSMINDA a very good Christian ; what must

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appear

* As to the Circumstance here related concerning the Apparition, the AUTHOR asserts it as Matter of Fact. He says, He himself, and sometimes along with others, have been Witnesses to it several Times.

appear in the most Dissolute, supposing they were touched with as quick a Sense as this Paper expresses. Yes, my OSMINDA, *continued I*, you shall indeed prevail ; and I thank you for your kind Admonition, and for this Confession too ; for by doing so, you have drawn my Picture. I now began to apply my self to Reading, considering it as a proper Exercise for a Person of my Time, and highly beneficial to obtain a right Knowledge in every Branch of Duty, and of excellent Use towards practising and persevering in them too : For Reading should be managed as Fire, which we desire to keep always burning : So that a Repetition of what is excellent is necessary ; and will, like faithful Monitors, always prompt us to what is right, and be affecting as Thunder in the Heavens which never fails to fill the pious Mind with Reverence to each Religious Circumstance : But now I found my self at a Loss for Books being in the Country ; for I had never seen any in the House, excepting some loose Poems ; Not that the House was without that Imbellishment ; for the Duke had his gilded Library as well as other fine Gentlemen ; but, like some of them, did not run the Hazard of soiling it much by Reading. Not that the Duke wanted Capacity ; but he suffered his Pleasures to have the same Effect. And here no doubt I might have been furnished with many worthy Authors ; but I cared not to be obliged for the Reason I told you. So I applied my self to the Dutcheß's Woman, which I thought the properest Person next in the Family ; for I observed she looked with an Air of Pity and Compassion of our Extravagancies : And going one Morning into her Chamber, found her reading. I told her, I was come to beg Assistance in helping me to some Books ; and that I did not doubt but that she had some good Ones in her Possession. She blushed, and offered me that in her Hand. I looked at the Title, and saw it was called, *The Gentleman Instructed*. I cou'd have wish'd, said I, that Part of this Title had been a little varied ; but what may be instructive to the Gentleman, may have in it many Things that may be of Service to the Gentlewoman too ; so dipping into one of the Pages, was confirm'd in my Opinion,

Opinion, by reading this Passage, where the Author asserts, " That one Act of Fornication, unrepented of, is sufficient to damn one." But when I came to that Part of *EUSEBIUS to the LADIES*, I was at once amaz'd and charm'd. Good Heaven I said I, if all these Things be necessary to be perform'd, which we meet with in these excellent Authors ; and sure, if we allow Reason its due Force, we cannot doubt their Veracity ; what a Condition is the Generality of the World in ! The Thought is able to cast a Shade over all our Enjoyments, in common Pity to Mankind. *Such were my Reflections, Madam, just before you enter'd, reply'd ARPASIA, (for so the Dutchess's Woman was call'd) which led me to admire the Divine Wisdom and Goodness in forming us with that Passion ; for Pity is implanted in us for the Well-being of the World, and seldom (if ever) separate from that Good-Will and common Charity we bear each other ; and by which we perform all those good Actions which result from that Virtue with more Aptness and Pleasure than we cou'd be suppos'd to have done, had we been made Strangers to it. Nor is its Degrees less wonderful, which flow from Nearness of Blood, and Intimacy in Love and Friendship. Now were we as liable to be afflicted by every Distress which arises in the World, as the highest of these oft-times produces ; how miserable must our Lives be ! So that however lovely this Passion may appear in its proper Effects, we have Reason to be thankful it is so limited. And this makes me desirous of observing another common Blessing, and that is the Time of our Dissolution being so much a Secret to us. This makes us relish every innocent Enjoyment in Life with more Comfort and Satisfaction, than if we understood its exact Period : And being we know Life is so very uncertain, they that are unhappy are apt to hope a much less Portion of Days, than what perhaps they find will finish their Sorrows ; so that Both are assisted by it.*

She was going to proceed when we were interrupted by the Dutchess's Bell, which oblig'd us to break off this agreeable Converse ; which indeed I did with Regret ;

for,

for, believe me, ARPASIA was a Person of extensive Genius, and great Goodness join'd, and worthy to wear a Title great as that her Necessity oblig'd her to serve. I told her, it should not be long before I made my self happy again in her Conversation ; and begg'd her to give me her Sentiments concerning what Books were proper for me to read first. She recommended the Church-History to my Perusal, and promised to supply me with the best Authors in our Language ; all which she punctually perform'd. *You charm me,* replied Sulpitia interrupting Rosalitta, *with ARPASIA's Character ; and I cou'd wish she was of our Acquaintance ; Her Advice indeed was admirable in proposing those Books to you ; for in them you find immense Treasure, more than enough to prove the Certainty of our Holy Faith, which directs us how to lay a sure Foundation, on which we build all those Hopes, which will endure every Storm of Persecution that arises in Life. And it is much to be wished, that our Gentry, nay, that all Persons, according to their Proportion of Time, which they consume in Vanity, wou'd apply Part of it this Way. This would be a Means of preventing that Ignorance and Infidelity, which are too visible amongst us, even to an open Declaration amongst some ; and they, who are less offensive by their Silence, seem not to be in a much better Way of Thinking ; at least their Actions declare as much, which have made it necessary to use this Manner of Arguing by them, who by all Means would save some, by putting a Suppose, That if those Things they teach shou'd not prove true ; yet, as it is possible, how foolish any one is to run the Hazard. Words indeed which might be fit for a Pagan Audience ; but a sad Reflection it is to think that CHRISTIANS should stand in need of them, who should hold it highly criminal to be in the least doubt. This looks, I think, as if that was about to be accomplish'd, which has been so long foretold, That when Heaven shall appear, shall there be found Faith upon the Earth ? And how much do we owe to the Memory of those Persons, who by their great Knowledge and Industry have supply'd us with Opportunities of being acquainted with those valuable Antiquities, by putting*
them

them in our common Tongue, which else had been a dead Letter to the greatest Part of the World, excepting that small which might have been receiv'd from some Preachers; which beside the Inconsiderableness of the Quantity, if the Preacher was a bad Liver, wou'd be receiv'd with Doubt. And it is to be wish'd too, that those Persons wou'd consider, however large their Talent is in that; yet how little they will prevail against the Vices of the Age, at least among the Ignorant, who are by much the greatest Number, if they see their Actions contradict their Precepts. And however sad that Consideration is, when we reflect on those Corruptions which flow'd in amongst Christians, even from the first Appearance of Christianity in the World, by broaching those abominable Heresies we read of; and the many and grievous Schisms in succeeding Ages, which sprang up to vex and rend the Church, and occasioned Sufferings little I think inferior to them by the Heathens in the general Persecutions: I say, however sad these Thoughts are, in giving us Concern for them; this Advantage we may draw from it, by making it even a Means by which we may prove the Certainty of our Religion, which we may trace as it were by Steps, made up of these Errors, even to the first Age of the Church: But I ask Pardon for this Interruption, and beg my Dear will proceed. I am never more happy, replied Rosalitta, with that wonted Sweetness natural to her Speech, than when I am so fortunate to say something which gives Sulpitia Opportunity to enlarge on; and it is with the greatest Pleasure I attend to her wise Reflections. All these I read, and found Conviction. I believ'd, and triumph'd; and soon found Opportunity to put in Practice what as yet had risen no higher than Speculation: For the Duke persecuted me with his Passion; and tho', as I told you, I endeavour'd to avoid all Opportunities of his speaking to me alone; yet he was industrious in contriving some: And when they fail'd, forbore not to solicit me by Letters. But finding me inflexible, he begun to alter his Behaviour; and gave me to understand, that if I was resolved to remain obstinate, as he call'd it, I was not to expect any more Favours. This was a sad Sound to one in my unhappy Circumstances; nay I confess it made me shed some Tears; but

I hope they were in no wise guilty ones : I wept it is true, but only as one who endeavours to get Relief, by shewing their Trouble, which was accompanied with many Petitions for Perseverance : Soon as the first Emotions of my Grief were over, I found my self much more at Ease, as if an Angel had been sent to diffuse some Rays of Heavenly Assistance into my Bosom ; and tho' the Prospect open'd so gloomy before me, being I must needs give up all the Conveniences and Pleasures in Life I had been used to ; yet when I considered the Danger I avoided, and the Blessing that was annexed to such Performance, that the Reward promised was no less than a Crown, I deliberated not : I had by some Days of fasting, which I had lately kept, made this Observation ; That a very little is sufficient to supply the Necessities of Life, and a little more enough to furnish us with real Enjoyments ; That a full Table is a Temptation ; and that of two Extreams, too little is less troublesome than too much. I had, as I told you, my Mother's Jewels in my Possession, which I was resolved to dispose of as soon as I could find Opportunity ; and that, with a little Money, which I had received in Presents from the Duke and Dutchess, I thought might be enough to purchase me a small Annuity, which would secure me of a calm Retreat in some obscure Part of the World, where I hoped to spend a Life of Innocency and Piety, and perhaps be more in the Way of doing Good than in my Exaltation.

And now I grew very desirous of compleating my Design ; and more so, lest the Duke, finding all his Efforts in vain, shou'd proceed to use some Violence. For I knew him eager in his Pursuit after Pleasure ; nor were my Suspicions without Foundation. For I was so fortunate to find a Letter which he had dropt in the Garden, written from one of his Companions in Riot, in which I saw several Hints tending that Way. This made me tremble ; and I thought ev'ry Day an Age 'till I found Means to make my Escape, which I design'd thus, to dress me in Men's Cloaths : And this I cou'd easily effect, being I had some of my Father's with me ; and changing my Complexion with a Wash, which I cou'd take off at Pleasure, I was not
much

much afraid of being discovered, shou'd I be met by any I was intimate with. One Night the Family having danced very late, or rather early, soon as they were retired, and I gone to my Chamber, I told my Maid, who I knew was not very well, I would have her to leave me, and retire to Rest ; that I had a Letter to write, and wou'd excuse her Attendance ; first having paid her her Wages in such a Manner that she cou'd have no Suspicion, by giving her a Sum which I knew was the Value which she was us'd to disburse for me. She no sooner left me, than I begun to put my Things in order, which were only a few of my best Cloaths ; the rest I was obliged to leave. And now, having finished my Bundle, I dress'd my self as I told you ; and having stain'd my Hands and Face, set down to write a Letter to the Duke ; in which I thank'd him for all his Kindness, and told him the Reason of my Flight. This being finish'd, I seal'd it, and wrapp'd it in a loose Paper, in which I writ a Line or two Directions to my Maid to deliver it, and so left it on the Table. And now having recommended my self to the Divine Protection, I went down a Pair of Back Stairs that led to the Garden : At the Bottom of which was a Door which opened to the High Road, the Key of which I had secur'd. Through this I pass'd. And now Day-Light begun to spread its Chearfulness around, and presented many pleasing Objects to my Contemplation ; when presently the Sun broke thro' its Eastern Gates. In short, all Nature smiled, and fill'd me with a secret Joy, something I thought like that the Angels felt when the Morning Stars rejoiced, and all the Family in Heaven was glad. And this was no small Relief to me in my uncustomed Toil of Travel, which I pursued with as little Loss of Time as possible ; never stopping, but when I stepp'd aside into some pleasant Meadow to rest my self, by reading a Page or two, or to eat a few Sweetmeats, which were all my Sustenance. About the Close of the Day, I came to a little Village, but one of the pleasantest I think I ever saw ; and where I cou'd have liked to have continued, had it not been too near the Place I

fled from. The Inhabitants seem'd all engaged in keeping an Holyday, which afterwards I understood was an Annual Feast, which they held at the shearing of their Flocks. Here I stopp'd to remark one of the best Houses where I might hope to lodge ; and going up to it, found several young Men and Maidens dancing on a pleasant Green before the Door. I enquired for the Master of the House, which a Lad quickly inform'd ; and he as readily came to me, and very courteously ask'd, What I wou'd have ? He was an old Man, and by his Behaviour appear'd very humane, and seem'd to have drank as much as inclin'd him to be more so ; and chearful ; Bounds, which none ought to exceed ; and when so, may be reckon'd a Blessing. I told him, I was unwilling to travel any farther that Night, and begg'd the Favour of a Lodging at his House ; that I was willing to pay any thing he thought reasonable for such Convenience. He told me, I was heartily welcome ; and call'd his Wife, and bid her (as he express'd himself) make much of me. The good Woman took me into her Parlour, and seem'd as willing as her Spouse. I asked her if I could have a Bed to my self ? But she told me, No ; because the Family at that time was larger than usual, it being their Feast : But, says she, you shall lye with my own Son. This embarrass'd me, and I found I was under a Necessity of discovering my Sex ; And what made me less unwilling was this Consideration, that I was not like to stay long there ; and that they might be Assistant to me in the rest of my Journey. So I related to her my Unhappiness ; but in such a Manner as conceal'd the Duke, and who I was. My Story moved the good Woman so much, she cou'd not forbear embracing me ; and assured me I shou'd come to no Harm in their House ; and that they wou'd do every thing for me in their Power ; and, adds she, here is a young Woman that is to go away in the Morning, so that if you like to continue with us, you may then have a Lodging to yourself. I thank'd her, but told her, it was too near the Danger I was avoiding ; but begg'd her to assist me in dressing, that I might appear

appear my self ; which being done, she call'd the young Woman to bear me Company. I learn'd by the Discourse I had with her, that the Place she was going to was thirty Miles from thence, and was a cross Road from whence I came ; that the Town was situated by the Sea ; so that if I shou'd meet with any Trouble by being pursued, I might have a good Opportunity of making my Escape in some Ship ; so I resolv'd to go along with her, and in order to it engaged the old Man to furnish me with Things convenient for my Journey. In the Morning when I took my Leave, I presented him with a Reading-Glass, set in Silver, which had been my Father's ; and the good Woman with an Apron wrought in Colours, which I begg'd her to wear to remember me by ; and assured her I shou'd never forget them. She promised me she wou'd ; and I believe she wou'd be as good as her Word ; for I saw Tears in her Eyes when she receiv'd it ; and I am apt to think they wou'd never look on these Trifles, but they wou'd think of me as a Vision.

That Evening we arrived safe at our Journey's End, where I was courteously received by the Mistress of the House, who was Mother to this young Woman I was com'd along with, and whose Family only consisted of herself, and two Daughters. Now if I was pleas'd with the Kindness I met with from the old People, these charm'd me : For I saw all the Signs of Goodness appear in their Behaviour, with a Capacity uncommon to such People, and very rarely found in such a Place. The first Thing I remark'd of this Nature, I cannot forbear mentioning, which was at my first Enterance into the House. I saw in the Chamber, to which they conducted me, several Books. Now, as I have Curiosity to look into any Books where-ever I find them, I opened one of these, and saw it was that excellent Discourse concerning the Decay of Christian Piety. But it growing late, and being much fatigu'd with our Journey, we retired to Rest. In the Morning, they all came into my Chamber to enquire after my Health, and to bid me Welcome to their humble

Habitation. As we were discoursing, the Bell, which seem'd very near us, begun to toll ; which put me on enquiring if some in the Neighbourhood was dead ? But they told me, it was for Prayers. I am afraid, said I, that my unusual Hurry has occasion'd a strange Forgetfulness in me ; for I cannot indeed recollect what Holyday this is. They answer'd, It was not an Holyday, but that they had always Prayers there both Morning and Evening. Nor will you be surpriz'd at this, adds the Mother, and much more of this Nature, when you are acquainted here, which is all owing to a good Lady, who is indeed the Lady of our Mannor, and who is (if I may express my self so) a Blessing to this Place next the Sun ; whose Wisdom and Goodness, by the Blessing of Providence, has wrought such a Change in this Parish, that when it is compared with others, it appears as different as what we may imagine one of the Heathen Villages in the Primitive Times newly converted to Christianity. There (continues she, drawing me towards the Window, and pointing to a neat House, which stood about a Stone-Cast from our's) she dwells just by the Church you see, where she never fails of being present at Divine Service if her Health will permit ; and where, if you have a Mind to go this Morning, you may have the Pleasure of seeing her, with her lovely Daughter the fair SEMANTHE, who copies after her Mother, and appears like a later Rose springing on the same Stalk. I told her, I always thought it my Happiness to have such Opportunity, and especially at that Juncture, when I stood so much in need in paying my Gratitude, in returning Thanks to Heaven for my Deliverance. As I spoke this, the Bells begun to chime, and we put our selves in order to go all but the Mother, who had taken Physick that Day ; so stay'd at home to make Breakfast ready against we return'd. If I am silent concerning the Particulars of this Church, it is because I shall speak of it in Order : But I must not omit acquainting you, as soon as the Service was ended, and we com'd out of the Church, ALVIRA (for so was the Lady call'd) with SEMANTHE came to us,

and with much Sweetness and Affability bid the young Woman my Companion Welcome home, and gave us all an Invitation to her House that Afternoon. Accordingly we waited on them, and found them in a Summer Parlour, which had folding Doors open'd to the Garden. The Furniture of this House appear'd very neat, but without the least Profusion. I think the greatest Splendor I remember in this Room's Furniture was some Flower Pots, which were placed in several Parts of it. ALVIRA had the Lady's Calling in her Hand, which she had been reading to SEMANTHE, who was engag'd at Work ; which Work was a rich Altar-Cloth she design'd to finish against Easter. It would be needless to tell you how much I was pleas'd with the Conversation of these Ladies, who after they had heard of my Misfortunes interrested themselves so much in my Welfare, that ALVIRA told me, she should think it a Happiness if I should look on her House as my home ; and SEMANTHE joyning with her press'd me to let that Happiness commence then. You may be sure I stood not in need of much Intreaty to what was like to be so much my Happiness ; and I bless'd Heaven for placing me in such a happy State ; and in that Solitude it suited best my Inclination. ALVIRA told me, she was sorry it should happen to be a Time of so much Abstinence at my first Enterance into her House ; but she hoped that wou'd in no wise deter me in joyning my self to them ; for her RULES extended no further than Example ; but it was Pity, she said, that they, whose more immediate Duty it was, and in whom more Power was invest'd for that Purpose, did not endeavour that that Duty might be more practis'd, which she thought might be an Occasion to many, who, rather than loose that little they had gained by bearing so much, might be willing to endure a little more, which might be a Means of preventing their falling into many Crimes, and by Degrees wean their Affections from Vanity, by fixing them on better Objects.

And now I shall proceed to give you some Account of *Alvira's* Life. She had lived a Widow near seventeen Years, the most of which Time she had spent in this Place, which was her Jointure : Not but that *ALVIRA* had another good Estate, which was left her by a Relation after her Husband's Decease, the Income of which she bestowed in Acts of Piety and Charity. Now the first Step she took in Things of this Nature, after her first coming here, was the Care of this CHURCH. For to the Church she had always been a constant Votary. Nay, so remarkable was she in this, that she never suffer'd her Visits to be any Interruption, by making her Acquaintance understand, that at them Hours she was always engaged, except when she increased the Congregation, by drawing them along with her. Now we must allow, that in any, who are careful to practice this Duty, it is a good Sign, tho' no Assurance of a good Life ; because we are sensible, that some, who allow themselves in the Commission of flagrant Crimes sometimes perform as much. But whilst we are Strangers to a Person's Character, Charity will oblige us to believe, or at least to hope, their Lives are agreeable to what we see. And they who endeavour to attain to every Virtue, this must needs be inseparable from the rest.

ALVIRA found this Church in a very ruinous Condition, which she not only repaired, but beautified with many Ornaments ; having first augmented the Living, by which Means she procured to the Inhabitants the Happiness of Prayers Morning and Evening, engaging the Minister to have a Communion every Sunday, promising that she, and several in her Family shou'd be always present ; and then she made no doubt but his wou'd be in Readiness. In order to this, she caused an handsome Altar-Piece to be erected, which she adorn'd with Variety of rich Hangings to distinguish the Times ; and being she had always lived near a Cathedral when in Town, which was (as I have heard her express herself)

herself) the only Thing she left with Regret. She was a great Lover of Church-Musick, which induced her to be at the Charge of an Organ here ; and this was accompany'd with four Boys in Surplices, who were Part of a Number taught in a Free-School she had erected, to the Master of which she allow'd such a Sallary, that with the Advantage of a little Country Business was sufficient to afford him a very comfortable Maintenance ; obliging him to be Master of so much Musick, as to be capable of teaching the Boys to sing the Psalms in different Tunes, with some easy Services, and a Sola Anthem on Holydays.

Alvira presented to this Church a large Silver Pot to hang in the Chancel, in which was burn'd Frankincense to perfume it on Festivals : And during the Winter Season she supply'd it with many Candles, which were all of them Wax ; for, she said, she could not endure the Thoughts of having Tallow burnt there, whilst so many honour'd themselves by consuming such Numbers of Wax Ones in their Houses. By these Means she won the Inhabitants to come ; and tho' at first perhaps their Motive was no better than Curiosity, by degrees they grew in Love with what is so truly valuable ; and to like that rapturous Way of Worship, which is a Means to prevent that Weariness we are too prone to in Things of that Nature. So that here might be seen, excepting the Time of Harvest, much larger Congregations than in many Parish Churches in no inconsiderable Town ; nay, than we often see in a Cathedral.

Here *Alvira* founded an Hospital for six Men, and as many Women ; which, with the rest of the Poor of this Place, were constant Guests to furnish her Table on Sundays and Holydays ; for she thought it not enough to allow them what wou'd supply them with bare Necessaries, but sometimes to make them rejoyce, by being Partakers of those good Things such Persons as she had in common ; and in this she thought herself obliged to be their Servant, by taking that

Trouble

Trouble of preparing for them. None here was sick which she did not visit ; and, if there was Occasion, relieve. None of her poor Tenants suffered by Loss of Cattle, or bad Seasons, but she redress'd it ; besides the Sums she bestowed in other Places, which was her private Charity ; for she sought for Opportunities to do Good, and was always pleased when she found them. She stood not in need of being teased, as they who occasion a wearisome Application ; and when they are hardly brought to consent, do it perhaps in such a Manner as must needs grieve and shame the Receiver. She understood that Charity should be exercised in the Manner, as well as the Gift : For indeed she had in some measure the Wisdom and Goodness of an Angel. Nothing she laid by at the Year's End more than what would prevent her being obliged to borrow, or waste the whole. Nay, as to that, I have heard her say, It should in some measure be parted with upon an extraordinary Occasion. “ Happy ALVIRA, (*reply'd Sulpitia with Transport*) happy indeed in to wise a Choice, which “ All, according to their Proportion, are obliged to : “ And if, as some where I have read, all that have “ some thing to spare are to be accounted rich ; how “ large is their Share, who are possess'd of such Abundance, which some consume all in Riot and Excess ? “ Whilst others choose to lose themselves by a different Pleasure, by hiding their Treasure, and making “ it their God ; and some deceive themselves by this “ vain Pretence, that they have Children ; so nothing “ can be spared to relieve a present Necessity : As “ if they could entail Prosperity upon their Families from Generation to Generation ; as tho' Providence had nothing left to bestow on Posterity. “ In what Confusion must those Souls appear at the “ Great Day of Account, when perhaps they cannot help beholding that various Train of Miseries “ they would not relieve ; perhaps in some, who during “ their

" their Lives Providence had placed as it were under
 " their Eyes, whose Modesty, and no Hopes of
 " Success, made them conceal. Sad is the Thought !
 " But may bring Comfort to the virtuous Poor,
 " when they reflect that their Account will be
 " much easier, who if they will may be rich in their
 " Desires, and their Minds fraught with much Virtue,
 " which will guard them against the Temptation of
 " envying the Rich, whose Grandeur in a few Years
 " will swallow up as well as their Sorrows : Both
 " which depend on no better Security than a Puff
 " of Breath, which every Moment may cease to blow.
 " But I hope my Dear will pardon me this second In-
 " terruption, and indulge my Curiosity so far, to make
 " Enquiry, if in all this Time you heard nothing
 " concerning the D U K E ?"

That Remembrance, *reply'd ROSALITA*, always
 brings me Sadness, when I think of the unhappy End
 of that unfortunate Nobleman, to whom I owe great
 Obligation, and who was by his Nature inclined to
 much Generosity and Benevolence : But when that
 rises no higher, we know it is of no Worth. And
 some we see rich in this Practice, which did it but
 spring from a right Motive wou'd seem to stand in
 need of little more than denying one darling Pleasure
 to make them appear as Saints to abundance. But,
 alas ! rather than mortify this one beloved Vice, will
 suffer themselves to be robbed of all that. The Duke
 you must know (as I was informed by a Lady who
 came to visit *Alvira* about three Months after my De-
 parture) quarrell'd with a Gentleman about a bad Wo-
 man ; and this Quarrel produced a Duel, in which the
 Duke lost his Life. This always forces the Tears into
 my Eyes when ever I think of it ; and, according to
Arpasia's Sentiments, we are happy that Compassion
 has its proper Limits ; else how wretched indeed
 shou'd we be, when we have Cause to believe that
 such Numbers are lost to every Thing that is love-

ly, and whose Vices, like Complection and Features in a Family, descend from one Generation to another. Now when this arises in a Friend, or near Relation ; to what a Height does it swell our Sorrows ? Which to remedy we are glad to bury in Forgetfulness ; and in order to that, according to this Maxim, I shall pursue my Story.

Three Years I lived in *Alvira's* Family with great Satisfaction and Tranquility ; but we know the Instability of human Felicity. This Happiness drew towards a Period ; and this was occasioned by an unthought of Circumstance, which was this. *Semanthe* and I arose very early to walk into a little Wood that extended itself by the Sea ; and reflecting upon the Variety of that stupendous Deep, we perceiv'd something swimming towards us, when coming nearer to View, we saw it was a Man fasten'd on a Plank. It swimming pretty near the Shore, *Semanthe* stept in, and drew it to Land. It was with Difficulty that we unloosed him ; and bowing his Body a little, there fell from him a great Quantity of Water, when presently we perceived him to breathe. This being done, I ran to acquaint *Alvira* with what had happen'd ; and she, coming with two of her Servants, forced some Cordials into his Lips, by the Help of which he recover'd so much in a short Time as to open his Eyes, and fixing them upon *Semanthe*, who stood by assisting, *I do not wonder*, said he, *that my Soul is so retarded in its Progress to the Skies, which a while ago e'er this wou'd have reach'd the Stars, when such Angelick Forms as Your's are employ'd in stopping its Flight.* Fye, Sir, reply'd *SEMANTHE*, this ill becomes you : You ought to employ these Moments in returning Thanks to Heaven for this wonderful Deliverance. *Alvira*, thinking this Discourse might prejudice his Health, begg'd him to permit her Servants to bear him in ; which being done, he was put to Bed, and all proper Care taken
for

for his Recovery. The next Day we visited this Stranger, who we found was pretty much recovered ; and desired to know, to Whom we had been a little serviceable ? When to our Surprize he inform'd us, that he was Priace *ARCHIBELL* ; that he had been negotiating some Affairs of State abroad, and in his Return that memorable Storm arose, the Report of which you cannot have forgotten. In the Midst of this Distress, he said, his Governour came to him, and begg'd him to suffer himself to be bound to a broken Part of the Ship ; which being done, he fasten'd himself to another, and both committed themselves to the Sea, but were soon parted by the Waves, which he fear'd had prov'd his Grave, that being the third Day of their Distress. *Abjira* understanding that it was Prince *Archibell*, desired him, that he would loose no Time in communicating the good News to the King. But he told her, He desir'd to be there conceal'd some Days 'till he was perfectly recover'd. This was only to make a farther Progress in his Passion ; for he was in Love with *Semantbe* from the first Moment that he beheld her ; which was receiv'd with much Coldness by that charming Maid. But one Day meeting her alone in the Garden, he interrupted her Walk by throwing himself at her Feet, and with Transport, said, *Why, Madam, is your Heart made of that impenetrable Mold, which neither Tears, nor Sighs, nor Prayers can move ? It is true, you saved me from the raging Seas, but let me suffer a far more dangerous Storm, whose tempestuous Waves press me down to Ruin ; and will not lend your Hand to help me out, without whose Aid I must sink into the lowest Abyss of Misery.* " Rise, Sir, reply'd *SEMANTHE*, and speak " not thus in Riddles, that I may understand you ; for " as yet I cannot, or what can be the Purport of " your Words. I fancy, continued *she*, you will call " this Love ; but I am afraid it bears a fouler Name,

" because the Distance is so great between us,
 " Because you are a Prince born to command, you
 " think perhaps that I with eager Haste should
 " rush into your Arms, and with my Person crown
 " your vicious Love. If it be so, (*went she on*) I
 " tell you, Prince, you are mistaken ; for you shall
 " know *Semantbe* has a Soul as great as your's, and
 " one that does abhor so mean a Thought." O,
Madam reply'd the Prince, interrupting her, *you*
wrong me. I wou'd not, durst not, think so base a
Thought. If such a Thought should crowd into my
Breast, I'd tear it from me. All that I ask, is
beneurable Love, but that the Priest may make you
mine. Ah ! Sir, reply'd SEMANTHE *blushing, and*
fixing her Eyes on the Ground, indulge not what
 must needs prove my Undoing. What Pleasure can
 you take in ruining a poor Maid ! Then on my
 Knees I beg you to nip this growing Passion in
 the Bud. I cannot, must not, dare not hear no
 more. ---- With that she left him, and came and
 related to me all that past ; and I perceived this
 last Address of the Prince had made a great Altera-
 tion in *Semantbe* ; and one Day walking with her
 in a Walk shaded with tall Cypress Trees, whose
 Leavey Branches excluded the Beams of the Sun, I
 was a little pleasant with her concerning her late
 Conquest, which by degrees drew us to choole Love
 for our Topick, when *Semantbe* press'd me to tell
 her, if I had ever experienced that Passion ? For,
 she said, she cou'd like to hear a Description of it
 from me, that she might form some Judgment
 concerning herself ; for she feared indeed it had
 affected her.

I very frankly told her, that in some Measure
 I had, by the Help of which, and Observation
 in others, I wou'd venture to say something con-
 cerning it ; and in order to this, I told her, that
 Love was a Passion implanted in us, both for the

Propagation and the Continuance of our Species ; and capable of giving us the greatest Pleasure and the greatest Pain, both which was accompanied with Danger : For they who are possessed of the greatest Share of this Happiness, are too apt to give themselves up to the Pleasures of Sense ; which is a Means of rendering their Desires faint and languid, after what is truly valuable ; and they who are unfortunate in it, are tempted to much Impatience and great Distractions, which are sometimes attended by the very worst Consequences. Now when we see a Person labouring under such a Calamity, perhaps from Circumstances unavoidable ; and that Person using their best Endeavours to make it turn to their Virtue : This is an Object worthy the greatest Concern, tho' I do not know why it is so ; they who are thus afflicted, seldom I think find a due Compassion, as they who are tormented with the Tooth-Ach, which when it is extream, may I think, be reckoned amongst the most accute Pains ; this must be, because we do not think them in Danger of Death : But as to the other, there are Constitutions obnoxious even to that : Now the best Remedy in my Opinion, beside what we may find in Religion, is Absence from the beloved Object ; and tho' the Means be slow, yet they are sure, and sometimes more speedy than we imagine, especially if we find another Beauty who has Charms strong enough to supplant the former. Nor is this Change unnatural, on the Account of second Marriages, which are sanctified by a Desire of Propagation, and preventing Sin. Now the Seeds of this tender Passion, is born with us, as that Love we see in Parents to their Children, and Children to their Parents ; but with this Difference they require Time, and many Circumstances to enkindle them ; when This perhaps, is blown to a Flame at the first Interview, and burns so strong

as to be able even in some Measure to change Nature : For it will make a covetous Person become liberal, and not only willing to part with what a while before his Nature prompted him strongly to keep ; but will administer Pleasure in doing it : And these may be reckon'd Blessings by which we perform these Duties with more Readiness ; but then we should be careful to distinguish when it is the only End ; so that they that perform those Duties without such Helps, are more sure and safe in their Virtue. This Passion has its Degrees too, according to Constitution or Difference in Beauty ; but when it ascends the highest, it appears the most amiable ; for then it is most apt to affect the Mind, which will be employed in Actions lovely, and separate from gross and low Ends ; and it is then that it seems to bear a Resemblance of what we call Love Angelick. SEMANTHE replied, that she found herself the most concerned in the latter Part of my Definition, by her uncommon Esteem for the Prince, which first shewed itself by wishing she had such a Brother ; and supposing him much more inconsiderable in his Birth and Fortune, she should think it Pleasure to conferr Benefits upon him ; that it would give her great Joy to kneel at the Altar with him, which Joy would rise even to Transport, when ever she believ'd him in a Condition to receive an Immortal Crown.

Now, *continued she*, if Mortals are capable of this ; what must that Happiness be which we shall receive by being intimate with Angels ! And we must needs be lost in the Consideration of that extatick Bliss we shall enjoy, by beholding the Author of All. Just as she spoke this, the Prince rushed from a Tuft of Trees which grew as we turned the Walk ; and throwing himself at her Feet, said, He was not under the least Apprehension of losing that

that Happiness she spoke of, whilst he was her Care. *Semanthe*, amazed to see the Prince there, her Face was covered with Blushes ; but composing herself a little, *This was ungenerously done, Prince*, said she, *thus to invade our Privacy ; and I should be sorry to think I had Cause to blame Rosalitta for the Contrivance.* Blame not ROSALITTA, said the Prince, nor me. I came here upon the same Occasion as you did, to shun the scorching Heat of the Sun's darting Beams ; when musing alone, a pleasing Dulness seized me ; and, willing to encourage it, I laid me down within this Tuft of Trees, where ever since I have remained asleep, 'till now waked by the Musick of your charming Voice, I heard those Words balm to my wounded Soul ----- He was going to proceed, when *Semanthe* interrupted him, by desiring him to rise ; for she thought she saw *Alvira* coming that Way. This was no sooner done, but we saw her coming towards us, and the Prince joyning us we walked to meet her. *Alvira* told the Prince, she was in Pursuit of him ; that she was very uneasy at his Neglect in not writing to the King ; and press'd him, that for the Credit of her Family he would delay it no longer : He assured her he would write that Afternoon, which he did, and the next Day a Messenger was dispatched to Court. This you may be assured, was joyful News to the King, and all that wished well to their Country, after they had lost all Hopes of the Prince's Safety. The King ordered a handsome Retinue to attend on the Prince to Court, and writ to ALVIRA and SEMANTHE, that it was his Pleasure they should accompany the Prince in his Journey. ALVIRA begg'd to be excused, but the King would not be denied ; so that it was purely in Obedience to her Sovereign that she was prevail'd upon to give up her beloved Solitude, but with a firm Resolution to return at the End of three Months : And having put her Affairs in

as good Order as the Time would permit, she left them to the Care of a trusty Servant, and we all appear'd at Court, where we had an Apartment fitted up for us in one of the Palace Gardens. SEMANTHE's Beauty and modest Behaviour drew all the admiring Eyes of the Court upon her, all carrels'd her but the Queen, who was of that malicious Temper, that she could not endure any Body should be taken Notice of but herself and Daughter. The Queen had this Princess, whose Name was TERAMINTA, by a former Marriage, and was design'd for the Prince: This made the Queen look with jealous Eyes upon SEMANTHE, and set all Engines at Work to discover if the Prince had a Passion for her; nay, so low she descended in this, as to keep Intelligence with SEMANTHE's Maids, one of which she bribed to her Service. The Princess was naturally the Reverse of her Mother's Temper, which made her have a great Complacency for *Semanthe*; and for the Prince's Love she valued it not; being engaged in a criminal Affair with a young Lord, who was of the King's Bed Chamber.

I think a Month scarce pass'd before we had the Unhappiness to loose the good *Alvira*, who was snatch'd from us by an Apoplectick Fit, and whose Death was mourn'd by all that knew her. The King was much concerned at it, and caused her to be interr'd amongst his Royal Ancestors; and order'd a handsome Monument to be erected to her Memory. And now *Semanthe's* strict Time of Mourning being expired, she again shined out the Beauty of the Court, admired by all; but especially by *Theolanthus*, the King's Brother, who was of an ambitious Mind, and had always hated the Prince for being a Bar to his Succession to the Crown, and more now for being his Rival in Love; so that he became his mortal Foe. This made the Prince press

SEMANTHE to a private Marriage to secure his Happiness; but she told him. That was a Thing she never cou'd consent to: For her Duty told her, it wou'd be the highest Disobedience and Ingratitude to the King; and she hoped, he had more Concern for her Repose, than involve her in so much Trouble as an Action of that Nature was like to produce. But she assured him, that whilst there was a Possibility of being his, she wou'd never be another's; so hoped he wou'd wait a more favourable Time. The Prince, knowing *Semanthe's* Steadiness of Resolution in every thing that concern'd her Duty, made him forbear to solicit her any further; but, influenced by the Violence of his Passion, and under sad Apprehensions of losing her, he contrived a Thing which caused the utmost Distress. The King had been of late slightly indisposed, and was at a famous Bath, which lay about twelve Miles from his Capital, for the Recovery of his Health. Here the Prince was often obliged to be present; and when he returned to visit SEMANTHE, he told her, he was endeavouring to persuade the King to consent to their Marriage; and so far indeed was true, he had propos'd it to the King, and had met with a sharp Reproof for it: This put him on counterfeiting a Letter, as written from the King, in which he consents to the Marriage, only desiring it might be kept secret from the Queen, to prevent the Trouble which might arise from her; and this he dress'd with such Circumstances, and strengthen'd with such Profusion of Presents, as though the King had made them, that SEMANTHE believ'd him, and their Marriage was solemniz'd in the Country for Secrecy, to which I was the only Witness: Of this you may be sure the Queen was quickly informed, and in the Height of her Fury resolves to break this Union, by destroying *Semanthe*; and, in the first Transport of her Passion, discovered the Marriage to THEALANTHUS, who maddened with the Disappointment bribed two Villians to assassinate the Prince as he went

in the Night to SEMANTHE's Apartment. The Queen sent for a She-Friend, whose Name was GRISILLA, one who was wicked enough for her Design; and walking with her into the Garden, which was called the Queen's private Garden, she discovered to her her Purpose, telling her to get her some Poyson, for she was determin'd that Night should be her last; knowing nothing that the Princess, over-heard them, who had the Privilege of that Garden; and, amusing herself amongst some of the thickest Shades, over-heard all that pass'd between the Queen and GRISILLA; at which she was very well pleased, hoping that she might give SEMANTHE Notice to escape her Mother's Fury; but how was she troubled when the Queen engaged her all that Day, so that she had no Opportunity either to go, or write. The Time appointed being come, that the Court was hush'd, and the King gone to Rest; for you must know the King was returned from the Bath the Day before; the Queen hastens to SEMANTHE's Apartment: The Prince had just enter'd the Garden, when he found himself assaulted by the two Villains, who mortally wounded him; and he pursuing them down one of the close Walks, it being very dark, they made their Escape: The Prince returning, heard somebody treading a little before him; and, thinking it to be one of the Assassins, thrust his Sword into the Breast of the supposed Villain; but how was he surprized when he heard the Accent of a Female Voice, which utter'd these Words, *Alas, I am slain!* The Prince stood like one Thunder-struck, when he understood it to be the Princess TERAMINTA: She recovering a little, said, What barbarous Hand is that hath wounded me? It is a Wretch, replied the Prince, who must for ever look with loathing on himself for what his mistaken Arm hath now committed. Ah! Prince! said she, is it you? Indeed it was unkindly done, thus to reward me, for I was going to save SEMANTHE's Life, but nought of Virtue is in this Appearance, my self the Motive, and

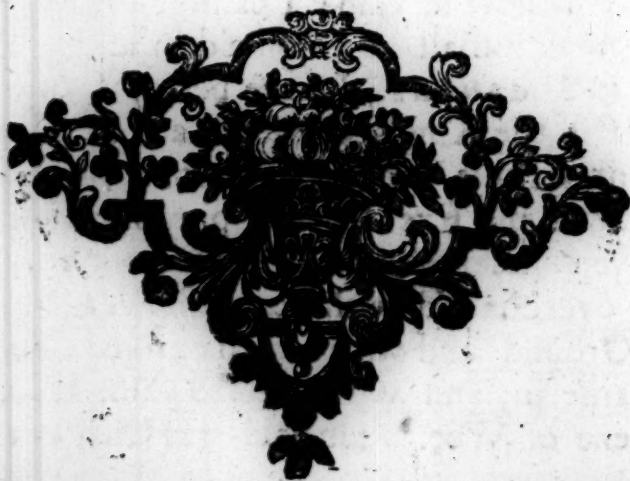
to serve a Crime; but Vengeance now has found me, and I must needs confess that Heaven is just: But Prince, I beg you not to let your Resentment harm the Queen; she may repent; remember it was TERAMINTA begg'd it with her dying Breath. With that she expired, leaving the Prince half distracted, who hasten'd to SEMANTHE'S Apartment. The Queen had just enter'd, and was going to execute her Cruelty, when the Prince stepping up to her, dash'd the Poylon from her, and was going to pierce her Breast with his Sword; but being check'd by the Pain he felt from his Wounds, and weak by loosing so much Blood, said, Hold, my Fury; I would not clog my Soul with the Guilt of killing thee; besides, it was TERAMINTA begg'd it with her dying Breath. O my Fears! cried the Queen, TERRAMINTA'S dying Breath? Yes, replied the Prince, even now she lyes cold as the Hand of Death. Then farewell all Comfort, said the Queen; and left the Room like one distracted. O SEMANTHE! said the Prince, are these our Nuptial Joys? This, this, my promis'd Bliss? But O! I dare not lift my Eyes to thine, nor hope for Pardon from thee. O my dear Lord, replied (SEMANTHE, embracing him in her Arms, and letting fall a Shower of Tears to bathe his Wounds,) What means all this, and why this melancholly Scene of Death? O ROSALITA, continues she, addressing herself to me, fly, quickly, call for Help. Forbear, I charge you, replies the Prince, for Help is now in vain; I cannot live above a Minute longer, which shall be employ'd in asking Pardon; for sure it is SEMANTHE; I have betray'd thee: I did but counterfeit the King's Consent; and it is my Disobedience draws this Vengeance down; but let Excels of Love plead my Excuse, and pray for Pardon for me. These were his last Words; and SEMANTHE, like a tender Flower overcharg'd with heavy Showers, sunk with him on the Ground, and with a Sigh expired. Soon after the King came in, and with his sad Complaints encreas'd this Scene of Woe. He said, He had been informed

that **THEALANTHUS** his Brother was slain by the Villains who were taken into Custody, who had confels'd they did it, because he refused to give them the Reward of their Treason.

And now we see Vice sometimes meets just Punishment even here ; only **SEMANTHE**'s Death requires some Reflection, who was entirely innocent ; except her too great Credulity may be reckon'd a Fault ; which some perhaps may call Imprudence : But I am very sure she was sincere in believing what the Prince told her, else she never would have consented : So that I am apt to think there was more of Kindness than Punishment in her Death, who had lived a Life of Innocence and Piety, and rich in many Virtues : So that, according to a wise Author's Opinion, to such a one, a sudden Death is but a sudden Joy ; and far less troublesome than a common Distemper ; and, which frees us from that Danger a Death-Bed Sorrow often tempts us to ; and perhaps she found her Virtue secured in it, by being freed from those Temptations, which might have risen by being exalted to that Height of Greatness.

Just as **ROSALITTA** finish'd her Relation, a Servant came to inform **SULPITIA**, that her Brother, who she expected, was arriv'd ; and they walked to meet him.

F I N I S.





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